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ABSTRACT

This guide, written for teachers and administrators wishing to introduce evaluation systems that promote continued teacher growth and enhance school effectiveness, suggests that meaningful change requires a clear understanding of what is already in operation, substantial skill development, and adequate resources for the duration of the change cycle. Rather than prescribing a single route to success, the guide offers examples of different evaluation experiences, describes possible evaluation courses, and, in separate chapters, offers five keys to effective evaluation: teachers, evaluators, performance data, feedback, and context. A subsequent chapter examines the important attributes of these keys in more detail. The guide concludes by offering two scenarios for success and a discussion on evaluating existing evaluation procedures, improving the teacher evaluation environment, and upgrading evaluation skills. An appendix includes a teacher evaluation experience questionnaire and a questionnaire for evaluators' self-examination. (IW)

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TEACHER EVALUATION

FIVE KEYS TO GROWTH

Daniel L. Duke
Richard J. Stiggins

A joint publication of
American Association of School Administrators
National Association of Elementary School Principals
National Association of Secondary School Principals
National Education Association

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Foreword

Teacher evaluation is a professional yet highly personal undertaking for both teachers and administrators. The way in which an evaluation is conducted and its results reflect the judgment and expertise of both parties. Both wish that reflection to be positive. For some teachers and administrators that is the case; for many it is not.

It is possible to structure a highly individualized, personally productive evaluation say Daniel Duke and Richard Stiggins in this important work. They do not prescribe a single route to success. Instead, based on their research and work in schools, they chart possible courses and offer five keys to effective evaluation as guidance for teachers and administrators wishing to forge systems that promote continued teacher growth and enhance school effectiveness.

We are pleased to bring this guide to our memberships. We believe the route to better evaluation practice is through a partnership between teachers and administrators. Duke and Stiggins have provided us with a clearly written, succinct volume we can use together. May we use it well.

Richard D. Miller, Executive Director, AASA
Samuel G. Sava, Executive Director, NAESP
Scott D. Thomson, Executive Director, NASSP
Don Cameron, Executive Director, NEA

Preface

It is one of life's ironies that those experiences which can be most rewarding also have the potential to be most frustrating. Teacher evaluation is like that. Done well, teacher evaluation can lead to improved performance, personal growth, and professional esteem. Done poorly, it can produce anxiety or ennui and drive talented teachers from the profession. This guide is dedicated to the improvement of teacher evaluation and, ultimately, the continuing professional development of teachers.

We wish to express sincere appreciation to the graduate students, teachers, and supervisors whose views and opinions are reflected here. Special thanks to Jason Millman, Nancy Bridgeford, Mildred Wait, and representatives of the American Association of School Administrators, the National Association of Elementary School Principals, the National Association of Secondary School Principals, and the National Education Association for their helpful reviews of early drafts of the guide; and to Sharon Lippert for her careful preparation of the manuscript.

Daniel L. Duke
Richard J. Stiggins

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A Closer Look at Teacher Evaluation

Meet these four teachers and take notice as they describe their experiences with teacher evaluation. Which teachers had "typical" experiences? Which had helpful experiences? The difference between good and bad teacher evaluation will become very clear in these examples.

Teacher 1

"I'm evaluated every two or three years, and this is the year! I've been teaching twenty-five years, so I know the routine. Still, it always makes me a little nervous. The principal and I talked about it and did some planning. We agreed on ground rules, talked about objectives, reviewed lesson plans, planned for the classroom observation, and so forth. We've worked together for years. The principal knows I'm a good teacher. Why be nervous?

"The day and the hour of the observation arrived. No principal. I started the show. Twenty minutes into it the principal arrived, took a few notes, and departed thirty minutes later. Did the principal know I ran into trouble and had to change plans midstream? Why did the kids choose that time to behave as they did? Did the principal realize that every day is not like this? My mind was racing!

"I received my answers to these and other questions at my post-observation conference. We were to meet right after school that same day, but the principal was delayed at the district office and didn't make it back in time. So we met a couple of weeks later. The feedback was all very positive. The state specifies the criteria. There are no ratings as such, just comments. All the comments were very flattering (as they always are). I received my usual satisfactory overall rating, signed the form, and left. It's always the same—I never understand why I get nervous!"

Teacher 2

"What can I do with this evaluation? Where do I begin? What changes should I make? I've had problems this year. It's been the worst year I've had out of the ten I've been teaching. The kids have been wild, almost uncontrollable. Parents have complained about my

tests and the poor grades I've assigned. I've had two special conferences with my principal and irate parents, and she noted that things had to improve. No wonder I was worried about the evaluation conference and my observation.

"On my observation day, my principal came in early, just as two kids started fighting; three others were throwing paper. That was just the beginning. Nothing seemed to go well from that point on. She stayed for ten minutes and left with a scowl on her face. At the end of the next day, during our postobservation meeting, she said these were the problems she saw in my class: students were undisciplined, I was poorly organized. . . . The list continued and I nodded as she reviewed each problem. Now she wants me to write out a plan for making changes, but I have no idea where to begin. What I need are some concrete ideas, but no one is available to help, particularly the principal. She thinks all you need to do is tell teachers what's going wrong and have them write out a plan. What I need is real assistance, not just a bunch of complaints."

Teacher 3

"You know, according to the other teachers at school, evaluation is always a waste of time. They say they never get anything out of it. Well, I sure got a lot out of it this year! That's probably because I was a new teacher and had a lot to learn. For instance, right away I found out how difficult it can be to manage kids. We talked about all that classroom management stuff in college—but it's different when you're standing in front of them on your own for the first time. They let me try it for a week, then Judy showed up. Thank heaven she knew how to manage kids. The principal had arranged for her to spend time with me for the first quarter. She saw right away that I needed help and went out and got Judy to work with me.

"Judy and I took one step at a time. She watched what the kids were doing and my management skills. Then she told me what she saw. Next we discussed what to do differently and how we would know if it worked. The next day she took over and I watched—and learned. Then I tried again, and I mean the kids were on task! I was amazed! Her tactics really worked. As we worked together on various problems that term, she watched, demonstrated, and provided suggestions. I tried and sometimes I failed—but my confidence was building.

"Every couple of weeks the principal showed up to let me know how pleased she was with my progress. I really felt like people cared because they took time to watch me and show me how. I'm not sure what I had learned beforehand, but I know I would not have survived without them. Did I learn anything from evaluation? You bet!"

Teacher 4

"It's funny. I don't give my evaluations much thought. Sure, I was nervous when I started. But when I got tenure I figured I would be left alone to do what I was hired to do. That's all I ever wanted. This year has been different, though. We got a new principal and she's sold on clinical supervision. So this fall I set a few goals to work on for the

year. I guess my main concern was to ask more challenging questions in class. The district's on this big push for excellence. We're all supposed to stimulate higher-order thinking, which isn't easy in general math classes. Anyway, I said I'd try to work on asking more questions that made students think.

"You'll never guess what I discovered. I've been teaching general math for twelve years, and I didn't feel I had much to learn. Well, the principal came into class twice and recorded the questions I asked the students. You know what we found? I only asked hard questions of a few students—usually the ones who do the best. Some students never got asked tough questions. Or I'd ask them a question and not give them more than a few seconds to answer. Then I'd provide the answer.

"The principal said I ask questions that really make students think, but I don't involve enough students. She told me that I probably feel sorry for slower students, so I avoid asking them hard questions or I don't wait for them to answer. She told me I'm probably ensuring that these students remain behind the rest of the class. I'd never thought about it that way before. I was pretty upset."

Teacher evaluations take the participants on a variety of journeys. Many teachers embark on an evaluation that they had no role in planning, follow the appointed route, and end up back where they started. Teacher 1 illustrates this kind of journey. Other teachers begin the journey only to find themselves stranded, well short of their destination. Teacher 2 suffered such a plight. Both the journey in a circle and the journey to nowhere are frustrating experiences that waste time and money.

On the other hand, Teachers 3 and 4 had more successful journeys. Teacher 3 traveled a collaboratively planned route with a precise map to show the way, and arrived at the intended place. Evaluation resulted in needed improvement. Teacher 4 was also provided with useful guidance, but to an unexpected destination.

We will return to a couple of these teachers later in the guide to examine the key differences in their individual experiences and to explore what made their journeys successful or unsuccessful. First, let us examine the road map of the evaluation process in more detail.

A USEFUL METAPHOR

Teacher evaluation is best thought of as a highly individualized experience—a personal journey. Each of the scenarios above could have taken place in the same school district. Despite the fact that all four teachers might have been part of the same system and subject to the same laws and contractual obligations, no two shared precisely the same experience. To understand how an evaluation process works, we must

understand how different individuals—supervisors as well as teachers—experience it. This means we must know something about these people—what they expect of themselves and others, their levels of experience, and how they conduct themselves on a daily basis.

There are many qualities of the teacher evaluation process that make it seem like a journey. Teacher evaluation implies some destination or goal. It entails a series of landmarks and mileposts that provide guidance along the way. Travel may be accomplished via different modes and routes and with or without company. Typically, there are time constraints to be considered. Finally, the person being evaluated, like the traveler, may require additional resources to reach the destination.

It is useful to bear in mind this metaphor of the journey when trying to think about teacher evaluation. While those involved in the process are likely to cover some of the same territory, they probaby begin and end at different places, require different resources, and use different reference points.

We make a crucial mistake if we assume that all teachers must travel exactly the same route to precisely the same destination according to the same schedule. Such lock-step application of performance assessment and evaluation methodology dooms us to inefficient evaluation at best and inadequate teaching at worst.

The purpose of this guide is to help educators understand how evaluation journeys may become more fulfilling, productive, individually relevant experiences. To accomplish this, we shall look at five keys to effective evaluation: attributes of those being evaluated, attributes of evaluators, evaluation data, evaluation feedback, and the context in which evaluation occurs. Our intention is, not to prescribe a single route to evaluation success, but to help chart the range of possible courses and locate some of the possible obstacles and dead ends. Before examining the five factors, however, it is necessary to consider the purposes of teacher evaluation.

SELECTING A DESTINATION

No journey can be successful without a clear sense of the desired goal or destination. No teacher evaluation experience can be successful without a clear sense of the goal or purpose for the evaluation. Most district teacher evaluation systems intend to reach two goals. One is the support of personnel management decisions. In this sense, evaluations serve the purpose of accountability. Teachers are accountable for demonstrating minimum levels of competence or they lose their jobs. Districts are accountable for protecting the due process rights of teachers and for conveying to the public the image of rigorous personnel evaluation and management.

A second and equally important goal for teacher evaluation is the improvement of instruction by promoting the professional development of teachers. That is, observations and evaluations of teacher performance are conducted to (a) stimulate the professional growth of individual teachers and (b) promote overall school improvement through the collective development of teachers as a group.

Both goals are important. State laws and collective bargaining agreements require evaluation for personnel management purposes; and aside from these requirements, it makes good sense to identify teachers who are not doing the job and encourage them to improve or ask them to leave. Teachers vary in competence and all can benefit from sound evaluation, encouragement, and professional development. Too often, however, the accountability-oriented system focuses solely on those who are least competent. As a result, others who also wish to continue professional development are shortchanged. If our goal is to improve instruction and we rely only on strategies that influence very few teachers (which we often do), we are unlikely to accomplish overall gains in teaching performance.

The point is *not* that accountability systems lack value. They serve an important purpose. But alone they touch too few teachers. We need evaluation systems that promote the development of *all* teachers, not just those having difficulty. We need teacher evaluations that help and encourage the tenured teacher to perform to maximum capabilities. In addition, we need evaluations that help the outstanding teacher—the virtuoso performer—to (a) use his or her strengths to maximum efficiency *and* (b) share these strengths with other teachers.

Teacher 1, in our opening scenario, is a typical experienced teacher who traveled the accountability evaluation route and ended up back at the starting point. Nothing of benefit resulted. Teacher 2 took an accountability journey to nowhere, resulting in extreme anxiety and frustration. No help was offered. If Teacher 2 is ultimately fired, we might say some benefit was derived from the accountability process. But a plan for professional development might save the teacher. In this case, we must weigh and possibly combine two purposes.

Typically, we plan the same evaluation journey for all teachers. In fact, many evaluation systems are designed primarily to support personnel action. The evaluation procedures are carefully spelled out, criteria are uniform for all, the supervisor is the sole judge, the data gathered on performance are uniform and focused, and the written record of results to be placed on file is the same for all. In short, we have planned the safest route to protecting due process rights and presenting a public image of rigorous personnel evaluation and management.

As a result, however, we limit our capability to serve the developmental needs of individual teachers and promote school improvement. Improvement-oriented evaluation routes vary as a function of the indi-

vidual. Performance criteria differ with teaching context and teacher capabilities; those who are in the best position to observe and evaluate performance vary from context to context; data gathered can be tailored to the criteria and information needs of individual teachers; and the record of performance can be private, describing teacher performance in terms that are relevant to the teacher. Growth-oriented evaluation systems account for these differences.

FIVE KEYS TO EFFECTIVE TEACHER EVALUATION

To make teacher evaluation a more individually relevant experience, we must first understand the important features of effective evaluation experiences. Toward this end, we conducted a program of research in which we studied teachers who had experienced positive growth triggered at least in part by an effective evaluation. First, we conducted in-depth case studies of thirty such teachers. Then we compared the key dimensions of each evaluation event in an attempt to identify the active ingredients—the keys to success. We listed those keys in a questionnaire (see Appendix) and asked several hundred additional teachers to describe their last evaluation event. These investigations helped us map clear routes to teacher development through effective evaluation.

Many ingredients go into determining the quality and impact of any particular teacher evaluation experience. These ingredients include the people who participate and the manner and environment in which they interact. Participants in the process are the *teacher* and the *evaluator(s)*. Teachers vary in competence, interpersonal manner, knowledge, and experience. They also vary in their perceptions of the evaluator(s). Similarly, those who observe and evaluate teachers—including principals, department chairpersons, other teachers, and students—all bring different viewpoints, temperaments, skills, knowledge, and experience to the process. We cannot accurately predict the result of the interaction between any particular teacher and evaluator because there are so many possible combinations. Based on our case studies, however, we can suggest at least some of the key attributes teachers and evaluators can bring to the evaluation experience to help teachers grow.

The impact of an evaluation experience is also dictated to a great extent by two key dimensions of the evaluation process: the nature and quality of the *performance data* gathered and the nature and quality of the *feedback* provided to the teacher. For example, evaluations can vary in the clarity with which they spell out performance standards or criteria. Performance data can be gathered formally or informally, with varying degrees of frequency and depth of information, by a variety of different evaluators. Feedback provided to teachers can also vary according to amount, frequency, and quality—each difference altering the impact of evaluation. Again, we cannot predict with accuracy what

kinds of data or subsequent feedback will have a positive impact on any particular teacher, but we can suggest those processes that are likely to produce growth.

Finally, the teacher, evaluator(s), data, and feedback all come together in a particular *context* for any specific teacher, and contexts can vary greatly. Several factors can cause variations in evaluation systems: differences in the resources available for evaluation and professional development, differences in district values and policies regarding the purposes, and variations in methods used for evaluation. We have some sense of which contexts promote growth-oriented teacher evaluation.

These, then, are what we regard to be the five keys to success in teacher evaluation:

- The teacher
- The evaluator(s)
- Performance data
- Feedback
- Context.

Important attributes of each factor are discussed in some detail in this guide. The differences between and among the opening scenarios become obvious when explained in terms of these attributes. This fact will be demonstrated in the concluding section.

Important Attributes of the Teacher

The most critical factor in teacher evaluation is the teacher. Like adults in general, teachers go through various stages of development. They reflect individual interests, abilities, values, beliefs, and experiences. There is little reason to expect these characteristics to remain stable over time. A probationary teacher is apt to deal with the evaluation process differently from a tenured teacher. A talented veteran will not react the same as a teacher on a plan of assistance.

At least six teacher attributes may exert an influence on the evaluation process.

INSTRUCTIONAL COMPETENCE

How much does the teacher know about the elements of effective instruction? How much does the teacher *think* he/she knows? Since much of the evaluation process focuses on the delivery of instructional services in classrooms, what a teacher knows or thinks he/she knows can help determine the quality of the evaluation experience. School districts may define other competencies, of course, but the following seem to be fairly basic:

- Diagnosing student needs
- Planning and designing lessons
- Presenting information to students
- Using questioning strategies to promote learning
- Measuring student learning
- Managing the classroom effectively.

Since research is always revealing new insights regarding effective instructional practice, teachers have an obligation to remain current in their profession. Teachers who are willing and able to keep abreast of new pedagogical developments in instructional design, evaluation, or classroom management, for example, are those who are most likely to grow from a solid evaluation experience.

PERSONAL EXPECTATIONS

Some teachers expect to be effective with all students; others reason that it is impossible to succeed with everyone. Some teachers expect to keep reading and learning about their field, others assume that a point is reached where they have mastered their profession. It is likely that teachers who demand a great deal of themselves will benefit most from the evaluation process. They do not have to be sold on the idea. Other teachers may have to be convinced that they have a need to grow and that growth will result in greater instructional effectiveness. Teachers reveal their expectations in various ways, including the following:

- How they account for student success
- What they do when they encounter a student who fails to achieve
- How they approach professional goal-setting
- How they react to professional development opportunities.

OPENNESS TO SUGGESTIONS

Personal expectations are closely related to a teacher's openness to constructive suggestions. With careful planning and preparation, useful information may be gleaned from a variety of people:

- Supervisors
- Fellow teachers
- Students
- Specialists
- Parents
- Teacher educators
- Researchers.

Teachers who benefit most from insights derived from these data sources are those who are open to suggestions that might enhance their effectiveness. Policymakers who are most likely to establish growth-producing evaluations are those who realize that helpful suggestions do not come from supervisors alone.

ORIENTATION TO CHANGE

Where evaluation takes place, change is a likely expectation. Professions such as teaching are too complex ever to be fully mastered. There are always new techniques to learn and new ideas to test. In a way,

teaching should be a continuous process of hypothesis-testing. When one approach fails to work well, we can speculate on the reasons why, select an alternative approach, and try it out. Effective teaching is a matter of constant experimentation and calculated risk-taking. Teachers who benefit most from evaluation are often those who are open to change. There may be a variety of reasons why these individuals remain open to opportunities:

- Expectation of success if they try something new
- Need for success
- Amount of commitment
- Perceived presence of support during the change process
- Reservoir of ideas about how to change.

Skilled supervisors recognize those concerns that may prevent individual teachers from taking risks. Sometimes this entails making it "safe" to try something new. At other times it may call for the supervisor to become a co-experimenter.

SUBJECT KNOWLEDGE

Technical knowledge of instruction is one thing; content knowledge is quite another. Content knowledge consists of two elements: knowledge of the subject matter to be taught and knowledge of the district's reflection of that content in the curriculum plan. How much a teacher knows about his or her subject can greatly influence the effect of the evaluation process. Teachers who are teaching a subject for the first time may be much more concerned about what they are teaching than how they are teaching it. The situation may be reversed for teachers with years of experience teaching the same content. Even so, these individuals may need to examine their content knowledge and be open to improving it.

EXPERIENCE

In addition to a teacher's knowledge of and experience with a particular subject or content area, the individual's general professional experience is likely to play a major role in how he or she deals with evaluation. Among the experiences that can influence a teacher's responsiveness to evaluation are the following:

- Record of success with students
- Reputation for classroom control

- Previous evaluations and relationships with supervisors
- Reactions from parents and peers
- Seniority in the school and district.

Teachers with a history of useful evaluations are more likely to benefit from future evaluations than those for whom the process has been uninspiring and uninformative. The impact of teaching experience is not so easily predicted. For example, some teachers with a history of success with students may have the confidence and ego-strength to permit them to take full advantage of the evaluation process, while others may interpret their success with students as proof that they have little to gain from evaluation.

Important Attributes of the Person Who Observes and Evaluates

To understand the evaluation process, it is necessary to understand the interaction between the teacher and the person who observes and evaluates performance. Since the evaluator is most often the teacher's supervisor (principal or department chairperson), we will use that reference. Effective evaluation can, however, include many other observers and evaluators. We will clarify this point later in the guide.

Supervisors, like teachers, bring different attributes to the evaluation process. Ideally, every teacher would have a supervisor perfectly matched to his or her needs and interests. Since this kind of matching is unlikely, it makes sense to identify those general characteristics of supervisors that most teachers acknowledge are vital to the success of the evaluation process.

At least six attributes of the supervisor may affect the quality of the teacher evaluation experience.

CREDIBILITY

It is difficult to imagine a teacher taking evaluation seriously when the evaluator is perceived to have little valuable knowledge of direct relevance to the teacher, the content area(s), the grade level, or the particular group of students. Credibility is a function of many things, including the following:

- Knowledge of technical aspects of teaching
- Knowledge of subject area
- Years of classroom teaching experience
- Years of experience in the school and school district
- Recency of teaching experience
- Familiarity with the teacher's classroom and students.

Many supervisors have had no direct teaching experience for years. As a result, teachers may question whether their advice is relevant to classroom concerns. (If the evaluator is a colleague, credibility may not suffer for this reason.) Supervisors may read extensively and attend conferences on the latest instructional research, but unless they can relate new ideas to a specific classroom context—preferably that of the teacher being supervised—their suggestions may not hit home. Some supervisors insist on continuing to teach part of each day. Others substitute teach or assist the teacher in the classroom periodically to gain the current experience "in the trenches" that is so crucial to credibility.

A key dimension of the credibility issue at the secondary school level focuses on knowledge of content. No one supervisor typically is perceived to be knowledgeable across all content areas. However, a supervisor must be able to comment on each of the following general aspects of lesson content:

- Accuracy of the information presented
- Relevance to student concerns
- Appropriateness for the level of student ability
- Appropriateness for course objectives
- Balance and fairness.

To increase the content credibility of the evaluation, it may be necessary to rely on evaluation feedback from more than one source. Department chairpersons, curriculum specialists, and other department faculty are more likely to be credible in curriculum content matters than are building administrators.

While technical knowledge of instruction and expertise in a subject are important, the single greatest contributor to credibility is likely to be an observer's familiarity with a teacher's classroom and students. To gain this familiarity, there is no substitute for time spent in class. Teachers realize that no two groups of students are alike. Therefore, until those observing and providing feedback can relate their comments to a specific classroom context, they are not likely to stimulate teacher growth.

PERSUASIVENESS

Credibility may be important for teacher growth, but it is insufficient alone. Evaluators also must be able to persuade teachers to alter their actions by providing clear, convincing reasons why change is needed. Reasons may derive from various sources, including the following:

- District goals

- Community concerns
- School needs assessments
- Classroom observations
- Analyses of student performance
- Research findings
- State and federal mandates
- Court rulings.

Another challenge supervisors may face is that of convincing a teacher that trying a new instructional approach—experimenting in the service of improvement—not only is acceptable but is a sign of good teaching. Persuasiveness is required in this context because evaluation has become synonymous with personnel action for most teachers. When someone feels his or her job may be on the line, risk-taking is not likely to be the highest priority. The effective evaluator lets teachers know when their job is not in jeopardy and persuades them to experiment and grow.

PATIENCE

Supervisors typically have more to do than there is time available to do it. Cutting corners is always a temptation. There is no substitute, however, for patience in the evaluation process. It may be easier to justify the time required to do evaluation well when it is realized that few activities in which supervisors engage have as great a potential impact and that a great deal of time can be wasted correcting the mistakes resulting from poor evaluations.

There are few shortcuts for those supervisors who seek to provide a rationale for the changes they may recommend in teaching behavior. Explaining why change is needed takes time—and a patient temperament. Time also is required to support teachers as they react to evaluation data, draw their own inferences, respond to evaluators' analyses, and speculate on growth strategies. The most prudent tactic may be to give a teacher time and space to reflect on the feedback that has been provided. Knowing when to back off, when to involve others in the observation and evaluation process, and when to press an issue with a teacher is a crucial skill for supervisors to acquire, one that entails more art than science. Sometimes intuition alone separates effective and ineffective supervisors.

TRUST

The ability to inspire trust is priceless for those who would presume to suggest changes in teacher behavior. Those who have the ability are able to deliver even the most critical feedback without jeopardizing their relationship with teachers. Those who cannot inspire trust may as well forget the goal of teacher growth.

While relatively little is known about how to inspire trust, it is likely that trust is related to some of the following:

- The supervisor's intentions (what the supervisor and the teacher regard as the ultimate purpose of evaluation)
- Maintaining confidentiality in communication
- How the supervisor handles evidence of performance from sources other than the classroom (e.g., hearsay and complaints)
- The consistency with which the supervisor applies evaluation rules and regulations
- The extent to which the teacher and the supervisor see themselves as partners in the school improvement effort
- The honesty and sincerity of interpersonal communications
- The extent to which the teacher has an opportunity to interpret evaluation data first before sharing it with others
- The extent to which the teacher participates in the selection of performance goals.

Effective supervisors and other observers should know how they are perceived by those they evaluate. Depending on their roles, they may be unable to get such insights directly, but one way or another they must obtain them. It is essential to know, for example, if one's praise is perceived to be gratuitous or if one has the reputation of publicly sharing remarks made in confidence.

TRACK RECORD

Every supervisor acquires a track record. In other words, the supervisor's observations and advice are judged in light of subsequent events. If teachers discover, for instance, that sure-fire solutions proposed by a supervisor rarely work, they are less likely to take the supervisor seriously. Here are several tips that may help:

- A supervisor should avoid giving the impression that all his/her suggestions are guaranteed to work.

- A supervisor should not feel compelled to have an answer to everything.
- When unable to solve a problem, the teacher and supervisor might try setting up an on-site "research" project to study the problem.
- When a suggestion is tried and fails, the supervisor and teacher should work together to understand why.

MODELING

One of the most effective ways for an observer to make a suggestion is to demonstrate a new idea or technique. (This is one reason why peers can make excellent evaluators in growth-oriented evaluation approaches.) The teacher then has the opportunity to observe what the recommendation looks like in practice. Although modeling under simulated conditions can be effective, an impact is most likely when the recommended practice is performed in the teacher's own classroom.

Supervisors can also model desirable attitudes. For example, those who want teachers to regard evaluation positively might ask the teachers to assess the supervisory performance. Or when they teach or conduct demonstration lessons, the supervisors might invite teachers to observe and critique the demonstrations. Modeling openness to teacher feedback may help make it safe for teachers, in turn, to receive constructive feedback.

Important Attributes of the Data Gathered on Teacher Performance

The extent to which teachers grow as a result of the teacher evaluation process depends on the quality and perceived usefulness of the feedback they receive, but the feedback will be only as good and helpful as the quality of the data gathered on the performance of any particular teacher and the appropriateness of the data-gathering procedures.

The procedural profile of any particular evaluation event is comprised of three basic elements: the manner in which issues of performance criteria and standards are addressed, the sources tapped and the methods used to gather information on classroom performance, and the personnel who conduct evaluations. Each element can contribute immensely to the quality and impact of the evaluation.

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA AND STANDARDS

Performance criteria define the dimensions of teacher performance to be evaluated. Performance standards represent required levels of performance with respect to the criteria. Under all circumstances it is essential that those criteria and standards be given careful consideration prior to any evaluation. They must focus on important aspects of the teaching-learning process, be objectively observable, and be clearly communicated to the teacher.

Attributes of sound performance criteria and standards vary as a function of purpose. When the purpose is to ensure that teachers have met minimum acceptable levels of performance for personnel management (accountability) reasons, the appropriateness of criteria and standards is evaluated in terms of—

- Uniformity for all teachers
- Legal defensibility as central to sound teaching.

Only then can all interested parties be sure the due process rights of teachers whose jobs may be on the line are protected.

When the purpose of evaluation is to promote the professional development of individual teachers, the attributes of sound performance indicators are quite different. Evaluations that stimulate growth tend to be based on criteria and standards that are—

- Tailored to the individual context and capabilities of each teacher
- Endorsed by the teachers as appropriate for them
- Informative about the degree to which each teacher's professional goals have been attained.

In this case, legal constraints do not determine the criteria. Rather, the teacher and the evaluator determine which criteria are meaningful, relevant, and growth-oriented for that teacher and the feedback the teacher receives focuses on those criteria.

DATA COLLECTION SOURCES AND METHODS

The performance data gathered in any particular evaluation can vary as a result of the source of information and the manner in which it is collected. For example, evidence of teacher performance can be derived from observations of the teacher's classroom performance, examination of classroom and school records (e.g., lesson plans), and examination of student achievement. If evaluation is to promote teacher growth, it should rely on all three sources. Any one alone is insufficient because it fails to provide a complete picture of how the teacher (a) prepares for, (b) presents, and (c) evaluates the impact of instruction. In addition, the data should be collected on several occasions during the year.

Classroom Observation

Classroom observations can take different forms. They can be formal in the sense that they are planned and are preceded and followed by a conference between the supervisor and teacher. Or they can be informal, as in the case of unannounced drop-in visits. They can also vary in frequency, ranging from one or two formal visits per year to almost daily informal drop-in visits. They can vary in length from a few moments to an entire class period and more.

What degree of formality, frequency, and length is most appropriate for promoting growth? The answer will vary greatly from teacher to teacher and school to school, but some generalizations can be drawn. The goal of observations is to obtain a representative sample of teacher performance from which to draw conclusions about teacher competence. It is *impossible* to draw confident generalizations from a sample of only one or two hours of performance. Such observations may satis-

fy state laws and contractual obligations, but they will not supply the information needed to promote improvement in competent teachers.

On the other hand, supervisors have many teachers to evaluate, and teacher evaluation is only one of their many responsibilities. So, time spent observing must be limited. If a supervisor has analyzed the task demands of the teaching job and concluded that there is simply not enough time to evaluate everyone well enough to promote growth (that is, with regular formal and informal observations ranging from a few moments to several hours), then the supervisor might (a) select a few teachers, concentrate more heavily for a period of time on them, and then move on to others; or (b) involve more people—e.g., other teachers—in the evaluation process so as to spread the workload over more shoulders. The latter strategy is included in the discussion of the evaluator(s), below.

What should observers look for? A primary purpose of classroom observation is to *describe* what is occurring during the observer's presence in the classroom. The process of evaluating what is seen is carried out later in collaboration with the teacher. That means the observer must understand and know how to use the tools of description. These tools include the chronology or narrative description of events as they unfold, strategies for keeping track of (e.g., describing or counting) particular important student and/or teacher behaviors as they occur, and videotaping for later debriefing with the teacher, among other things. Sound, growth-producing evaluation begins with an objective record of teacher performance, not with judgmental feedback on the quality of classroom events.

Examination of Records

Classroom records represent a valuable source of information from which to derive directions for professional development. For example, lesson plans reflect the extent to which teachers have thought through and planned their instructional intentions. Tests, quizzes, assignments, and other assessments reflect the extent to which teachers have (a) clarified their expectations of students and (b) linked assessment to instruction. Grading practices and comments on returned papers reveal key dimensions of student performance that teachers value. Student notes can reveal instruction that worked and instruction that needs to be repeated. Examination of these and other artifacts of instruction can help teachers and supervisors agree on goals for further development of teaching skills.

Measurement of Student Achievement

To understand the key role student achievement data can play in teacher evaluation, we need to remain keenly aware of what kinds of

data are used by whom and for what purpose. To begin with, measurement experts and professional educators alike agree that it is bad practice to use standardized achievement test scores in conducting summative, accountability-oriented evaluations of teachers. There are two sound reasons for this. First, the tests are too imprecise (i.e., brief and superficial) to serve as valid performance criteria. They cannot test enough of what is taught to be fair. Second, too many factors that are beyond the control of the teacher influence student performance on these tests.

Here we arrive at a paradox. We know that standardized student achievement test scores provide an inadequate basis upon which to evaluate teachers,[1] yet we also know that one key index of the quality of teaching is, in fact, student learning. So, do we ignore student achievement in evaluating teachers? Definitely not. We do, however, approach the data and their use from a different direction. If we are careful to give teachers the know-how and the tools to measure and keep track of student growth on a day-to-day and week-to-week basis, and if we place teachers in charge of gathering, analyzing, and presenting evidence of the growth of students using teacher-developed and text-embedded classroom assessments, then surely teachers will be in a position to identify teaching approaches that promote student achievement. On the basis of these results, teachers and their supervisors can detect areas of instruction in which the teachers need further professional development.

In short, student achievement data can play a key role in teacher evaluation if the data are (a) sensitive to day-to-day instructional priorities, (b) used by the teacher and the supervisor working together, and (c) used to promote teacher improvement. To reach this goal, both the supervisor and the teacher may have to think about how to improve their level of confidence and expertise in the measurement of student achievement.

THE EVALUATOR(S)

It is convenient and perhaps traditional to think of the teacher's evaluator as being the teacher's supervisor. For the elementary teacher, this is most often the principal. For the secondary teacher, it may be the

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[1]The authors argue that the most productive and fair use of standardized test scores is in the context of program rather than personnel evaluation. Program evaluation is based on the belief that test scores are the result of a complex variety of factors that constitute the program of instruction. An individual teacher controls too few of these factors to be held accountable for scores. Factors not controlled by the teacher include contribution of previous teachers, quality of materials, class makeup, and teaching assignment.

principal, assistant principal, or department chairperson. When the purpose of the evaluation is accountability and personnel action may result, it is often required by law and contract that the supervisor and evaluator be the same.

However, when the purpose is to promote teacher growth and development, we may want to expand the way we view evaluation. Many types of evaluation not permitted for accountability purposes are viable options for growth systems. For instance, a teacher's self-assessment may be considered self-serving and therefore inadmissible in a termination hearing. Yet the teacher's own perspective on personal growth is invaluable to professional development. In order to grow, a teacher must see and acknowledge the need for change.

Similarly, peer assessment could be challenged by the teacher association in a case of dismissal of one of its members. In a legal sense, information from peers could be considered potentially biased. Yet we know that in growth-oriented approaches to evaluation there may be no more qualified source of feedback on teacher performance than another experienced, competent teacher. Teachers take their colleagues' views to heart and learn from them.

Finally, student evaluations of teacher performance might be suspect in a termination hearing. Participants could regard students as easily influenced, biased, or unqualified to judge minimum competence. There may, however, be no more valid source of information on and criticism of learning environments than the students who live and work in those environments. When their views are sought in careful, thoughtful ways in evaluation systems designed to promote teachers' continued growth, students can provide insights no one else can. Every teacher who is serious about professional growth is deeply interested in how he or she affects students and is perceived by them.

If we think of only one set of evaluation procedures to be applied rigidly to all teachers and if we allow strict legal constraints to dictate those procedures, we eliminate from our repertoire many of the best tools available to influence and support teacher growth. We should move toward the negotiation of multiple evaluation procedures which uphold the law, protect teachers' and districts' rights, ensure accountability, and promote teacher improvement. After all, evaluation at its best is a process of communication with a focus on encouragement and improvement.

Important Attributes of the Feedback

The most crucial interpersonal link between the teacher and the observer occurs when the teacher is provided with information on his or her performance. If growth is to occur, it is most likely to begin with this communication. Therefore, successful evaluation for whatever purpose requires that feedback procedures be carefully planned. Even the most appropriate information based on the best quality data collection procedures will fall on deaf ears if not delivered in a sensitive, caring manner. The teacher also will appreciate feedback more if it is shared in a private setting, preferably one that represents "neutral turf."

There are many factors to consider in planning and delivering feedback on teacher performance, including the following:

- How much feedback to give at one time (too much can be overwhelming)
- The level of formality needed to achieve desired purposes
- How to communicate ideas and suggestions that will make sense to the teacher
- The specificity of the information provided (it must suggest specific actions to the teacher if growth is needed)
- How frequently to provide feedback on performance in order to encourage continued development
- Whether to convey descriptive information on teacher performance or evaluative judgments regarding that performance
- How to time any feedback to have maximum impact
- How to be sure the feedback relates to prespecified performance standards.

It is possible to find many teachers annually receiving feedback that reflects general teacher traits as spelled out by state law, but such feedback rarely contributes much to teacher development. From teachers' perspectives, the kind of feedback that will encourage growth comes from a credible source, describes specific aspects of their teaching along with ideas and suggestions for improvement that make sense in terms of their contexts, arrives with sufficient regularity to allow them to track their improvement, and is as often informal as formal.

Important Attributes of the Evaluation Context

The evaluation process, as discussed up to this point, involves a teacher, an evaluator, data, and feedback. While these elements are central, it is also necessary to realize that teacher evaluation occurs in an organizational context. Every school and district boasts its own unique culture—norms, expectations, traditions, and the like. It is impossible to understand fully how the teacher evaluation process functions without knowing something about the setting in which it takes place. Six contextual factors may be particularly influential.

DISTRICT POLICY

Most school districts have policies governing the evaluation of teachers. Such policies range from simple statements affirming the district's obligation to ensure quality instruction to elaborate guidelines covering a variety of evaluation issues. They often reflect personnel management priorities. Among the areas that policies may address are the following:

- Purpose of evaluation
- Performance standards
- Performance criteria
- Frequency of evaluation
- Consequences of unsatisfactory evaluation
- Resources for professional development
- Individuals responsible for conducting evaluations
- Evaluation procedures
- Appeal procedures.

While official policies are not always followed faithfully, they often have the force of law behind them. As a result, they may be expected to exert considerable influence over the nature of the evaluation pro-

cess. Supervisors in districts with unclear or incomplete evaluation policies sometimes find it difficult to compel teachers to correct unsatisfactory performance and impossible to encourage competent teachers to grow. A district interested in developing an evaluation process that is more growth-oriented would be well advised to first examine its existing policies.

STATE LAW

The operation of public schools is a responsibility reserved to states. Forty-six states have a law or administrative regulation mandating the evaluation of teachers. Thirty-six of those states include teacher improvement as a purpose of evaluation. These mandates typically are designed to protect the public from incompetent and unethical educational practice and preserve the due process rights of teachers. State laws/regulations vary considerably in such areas as—

- Performance standards
- The form in which evaluations must be reported
- Procedures for collecting evidence of teacher performance
- Dates by which steps in the evaluation process must be completed
- Grounds for dismissal
- Appeal procedures.

For example, ten states specify at least one method for collecting data on teacher evaluation. More specifically, ten states mandate classroom observation, nine require interviews, and six provide for review of work portfolios.[1]

We would do well to remember that these mandates specify minimum acceptable standards of teacher evaluation practice. They do not limit practice only to those minimums.

CONTRACTUAL OBLIGATIONS

A third set of contractual factors influencing the teacher evaluation process derives from collective bargaining agreements and contracts. Again, these agreements are typically designed to protect due process in case of personnel action. A majority of states permit teachers to bargain collectively on such issues as salary, benefits, and evaluation pro-

[1]National Education Association, Professional and Organizational Development, Instruction and Professional Development, *School Personnel Evaluation Manual* (Washington, D.C.: the Association, 1985).

cedures. Contracts vary a great deal across states and localities, but in general they cover such matters as—

- When and how often teachers are to be observed
- What kinds of evidence are admissible for evaluation purposes
- Procedures for notifying teachers of evaluation results
- Procedures for entering material in personnel files
- Who can and cannot conduct evaluations
- Procedures for dealing with unsatisfactory performance
- Appeal procedures.

We might do well to regard the potential role of evaluation in promoting teacher growth as we negotiate teacher-district working relationships.

HISTORY OF LABOR RELATIONS

District policies, state laws, and contractual obligations represent statements of intention. What actually happens on a daily basis, of course, is influenced by these formal guidelines, but it is also affected by the collective experiences of school personnel. These experiences may stimulate employees of some systems to go far beyond written expectations in their efforts to make the evaluation process function effectively. In districts where labor-management relations have been strained or evaluation practices have been uneven, employees may be skeptical about and unreceptive to the evaluation process.

Perhaps the best way to minimize these disruptions is to develop evaluation systems in a context where teachers and district administrators are full partners in designing and monitoring the evaluation process. If teachers have a role in determining performance standards, selecting target concerns for observation, and identifying resources for professional development, they are more likely to perceive the evaluation process as being helpful and are more likely to feel a sense of ownership in the system.

TIME SPENT ON EVALUATION

Sound evaluation practice requires time. Time is needed for such activities as—

- Designing and setting up an evaluation system
- Convening goal-setting conferences
- Conducting preobservation conferences

- Carrying out classroom observations
- Conducting postobservation conferences
- Carrying out informal classroom visits and feedback sessions
- Coordinating the involvement of teachers, students, and others
- Individualizing professional development, as in the case of setting up demonstration lessons or arranging vists to other schools.

Where evaluation is not regarded as a high priority, supervisors may begin to take shortcuts. For example, they may skip goal-setting conferences and have teachers write up and submit their own lists of goals, or they may leave a copy of their observations in a teacher's mailbox in lieu of meeting with the teacher to discuss them. Each shortcut increases the likelihood that teachers will not take the evaluation process seriously and, consequently, not derive maximum benefit from it.

How much time should participants spend on the evaluation process? Opinions vary. Some say supervisors should spend one-third of their time on evaluation. Others discuss an optimal ratio of teachers to supervisors to ensure sufficient time. In fact, the time commitment will need to vary to accommodate particular school contexts and variation in teacher needs. There is no simple formula or time estimate. How much time administrators actually spend on evaluation is a function, to a great extent, of district policies, expectations, and criteria for evaluating the performance of supervisors. If evaluation is to produce growth, there must be an obvious commitment to growth from the top.

RESOURCES AVAILABLE FOR GROWTH

If evaluations are to contribute to the professional growth of teachers, resources for development must be available. It is hard to justify a system that targets areas for growth and professional improvement but fails to provide the resources necessary for improvement. There must be a systemwide commitment to improvement, including school board members, administrators, and teachers. Resources that districts may need to provide in order for teachers to improve their performance include the following:

- Released time for visiting other classrooms, modeling a particular teaching process in a colleague's classroom, attending workshops, and the like
- Technical assistance from consultants and in-district experts
- In-class information retrieval systems that allow teachers to gain regular feedback on performance

- Videotape equipment (with the understanding that the tapes remain in the teacher's possession and their release for viewing by others is up to the teacher)
- Staff development activities (often provided for individual teachers)
- Professional library materials
- Peer mentors.

By making resources available to teachers, a district demonstrates its commitment to growth-oriented evaluation. Otherwise, teachers are likely to regard the evaluation process in a negative light.

A Scenario for Success

Having completed this road map for effective, growth-producing teacher evaluation, let us return to two of the teachers we met at the beginning of the guide and analyze their experience in terms of the five keys to sound evaluation.

TEACHER 1: THE JOURNEY IN A CIRCLE

You will recall that Teacher 1—a basically competent, experienced professional—went through the typical evaluation cycle, including a planning conference, a brief classroom observation, and a feedback conference. All requirements of the law and the collective bargaining agreement were satisfied. Both parties involved fulfilled their responsibilities. Yet the entire process produced nothing of value. What went wrong? Why was growth not stimulated in this case?

To answer these questions we must consider important attributes of the teacher. Sound evaluations focus on the instructional competence of the teacher. The instructional competence of Teacher 1 was never an issue in this perfunctory evaluation. The criteria for evaluation were those specified by the state—the same for everyone. Any (or almost any) experienced teacher would demonstrate minimum competence in these areas. But where is Teacher 1 on the overall continuum of competence? On the basis of one 30-minute observation by one person, we cannot hope or presume to know.

In this brief and superficial evaluation encounter, most other key attributes of the teacher never came into play either. Teacher 1's personal expectations were not addressed, nor were issues of perceived needs to grow. Openness to criticism and orientation to change were not addressed, nor were subject knowledge or professional experience. These attributes and so many more were simply ignored in the haste to complete the evaluation.

Turning to attributes of the person who observed and evaluated Teacher 1, we don't know if the supervisor was a credible source of suggestions for improvement, because the event was too superficial for credibility to come into play. The supervisor was persuasive—the teacher came away believing everything was okay. Patience and trust

were not at issue, because the two participants never had close enough interpersonal professional contact for these attributes to become important. The supervisor did have a track record with this teacher, however—a record of superficial, positive evaluations. This was a supervisor capable of alleviating the anxiety of evaluation, but is that enough to promote improvement?

Recommended and required evaluation procedures were carried out to the letter. There was a preobservation conference. Performance standards were reviewed at that time and the observation was scheduled. The observation took place, late and brief though it may have been. But how do the general performance standards relate to the growth needs of Teacher 1 as an individual? In addition, do we presume to generalize from one sample of carefully planned instruction to the quality of Teacher 1's typical performance? Do we presume to generalize from one 30-minute potentially biased sample of teaching performance to thousands of hours of teaching? Who would act on feedback from such a brief encounter? Much more evidence—better-quality evidence—is needed if we are to generate insights that help teachers.

The feedback was formal, superficial, contained no suggestions for change, was provided only once, related to criteria that may have had little relevance to the teacher, and was delivered by a person insensitive to the fact that the teacher might anxiously await the results of the evaluation even though it was positive and not threatening.

In short, this teacher evaluation took place in a context where evaluation was not a valued dimension of teacher development—a context in which specified procedures were adhered to with minimum investment of time and other resources.

TEACHER 3: THE JOURNEY TO IMPROVEMENT

There is an alternative to traveling the evaluation route in a circle. We *can* ride effective teacher evaluation to better schools. Consider the experience of the third teacher in our opening scenarios. This teacher was inexperienced and having difficulty until help arrived in the form of people (a cooperative supervisor and an experienced teacher) who knew how to use evaluation to promote growth. Let us review the profile of this evaluation sequence.

Teacher 3 was one whose competence was undeveloped, but the teacher's professional expectations were high. The importance of changing and improving was clear, and this teacher was open to receiving—in fact anxious to receive—suggestions of a constructive, helpful nature.

In this case, two people observed and evaluated. The supervisor was observant, patient, trusting, and smart enough to sense the need for and to get help—quickly. An experienced colleague was brought in to assist

the teacher and established credibility quickly by showing right away how the classroom could be managed more effectively. She observed, evaluated, provided focused feedback, and modeled good practice. She was persuasive and patient, and she commanded trust. The growth that resulted from peer evaluations was obvious to all.

Data collection procedures revolved around performance indicators that were immediately relevant to Teacher 3. The evaluations were formal and informal, and they continued over an extended period of time. Data of various sorts were gathered, mostly via continuous, extensive classroom observations.

The feedback was continuous and rich with specific suggestions for change. It was delivered in a sensitive, persuasive manner.

In short, this is a profile of an evaluation encounter of a different kind. Here the supervisor valued personal growth. Obviously resources had been appropriated in advance by the district to allow the experienced teacher to come on short notice to help her colleague. A district commitment had been made to school improvement.

This is just one possible scenario for success. The story would look totally different for a more experienced teacher or an outstanding teacher, though growth is also possible for these teachers if we adhere to the attributes of sound evaluation practice.

ON THE ROAD TO BETTER EVALUATION

Who can afford all this evaluation, given severely restricted resources? If the goal is school improvement, nearly all the money and time currently spent on efforts like that involving Teacher 1 are being wasted anyway. Perhaps at least some of these resources could be combined with those for staff development to produce an evaluation environment and procedures that truly affect the quality of teaching and learning.

If teacher evaluation is to promote the kind of teacher and school improvement we all seek, careful attention must be given to each of the five key areas described in preceding sections. Teachers and evaluators must bring important attributes to the evaluative interchange. Evaluators must use sound evaluation practices and foster a healthy environment. Appropriate performance information must be gathered, summarized, and relayed back to the teacher in such a manner as to promote open communication. And all of this must take place in a context focused on teacher growth.

While there is no simple route to achieving these goals, districts seeking growth-oriented teacher evaluation might consider the three-part strategy of (a) evaluating existing evaluation procedures, (b) improving the evaluation environment, and (c) upgrading evaluation skills.

Evaluating Existing Evaluation Procedures

All school systems have an existing set of teacher evaluation procedures. Before attempting to revise these procedures, it is important for teachers and evaluators to take stock of their perceptions of current practices. The questionnaires in the Appendix can assist in this effort.

Reproduce and distribute to teachers copies of the "Teacher Evaluation Experience Questionnaire." Using this form (or a local adaptation of it), teachers can describe their last evaluation event and convey how it affected them. Simultaneously reproduce and distribute to evaluators the questionnaire entitled "Describing Yourself as an Evaluator of Teachers." When the responses have been collected and summarized (frequency distribution of ratings on *each item*), the current system can be analyzed in terms of its potential for promoting growth.

A strategy that has worked well for us in assisting districts to analyze and evaluate questionnaire results is the creation of a review committee comprised of representatives of all interested parties (teachers, principals, and district office). The steps in the committee review might include the following:

1. Committee members study a copy of each questionnaire (before seeing results) and predict which areas of concern and individual items they think will need attention in revising the evaluation system.

2. Committee members review survey results item by item. Predictions are compared with actual results to identify those areas or items that need attention first.

3. Committee members compare evaluator and teacher responses on the two questionnaires. Similarities and differences are noted and explored.

From such an analysis of survey data, the committee can begin to devise a plan of action to address areas of greatest concern.

Improving the Teacher Evaluation Environment

The creation of a committee representing all interested parties for the purpose of studying the teacher evaluation process will contribute greatly to a positive environment. In addition, however, consider these strategies.

Make it safe for teachers to be observed and to receive suggestions from a supervisor and, perhaps, other individuals. Plan formal and informal observations and conferences that are not recorded or placed on file. Let professional development be the only goal for a designated period of time.

Videotape and critique conferences between teachers and supervisors. Teachers and supervisors meet on occasion to set annual goals, identify targets for classroom observations, and discuss results of these observations. They rarely, however, reflect on the effectiveness of these interactions. As a result, both teachers and supervisors lack useful feedback on their performance in conferences. Teachers can use the attributes of effective supervisors as listed earlier to guide their critiques.

Involve teachers in developing or modifying performance criteria and evaluation standards so that they will have more meaning for teachers. Once developed, these performance indicators should periodically be reviewed and revised in light of the latest research on effective practice. One characteristic of a profession is the participation of members of the profession in determining bases for their own evaluation.

Upgrading Evaluation Skills

Growth-oriented teacher evaluation is only possible when those involved in the process are skilled at observing and describing instruction, summarizing and conveying feedback, and linking individual teacher needs to professional development resources.

Participants might practice observing in classrooms, recording descriptive data, and reporting it back to teachers. Observations might focus on specific behaviors, events, or attributes of instruction. Descriptive data might be recorded via counting, rating, mapping, verbatim recording of interchanges, and so forth. Observers should reflect classroom characteristics back to the teacher without evaluative judgment. These are the evaluative interactions that refine evaluation skills and promote teacher growth.

As evaluation skills are refined, professional development needs will become apparent. Districts, as a result, will need to conduct an inventory of resources available for teacher assistance. The purpose of growth-oriented teacher evaluation is to provide information concerning potential improvement in performance. Information alone, though, is not always helpful. Teachers may require assistance in changing their behavior. What resources in the form of people, materials, learning opportunities, and funds for professional development are available locally? What additional resources may be needed? Answers to these questions must be obtained as part of the preparation for growth-oriented teacher evaluation.

FINAL THOUGHTS

There is a great deal of research and development on teacher evaluation being conducted across the nation. Most of this work is taking place in local districts as they experiment with a variety of innovative

ideas.[1] Those concerned with improving teacher evaluation often can benefit from lessons learned by others. Seek out and explore such projects.

The ideas described in this guide can launch a school or school system on the road to more growth-oriented teacher evaluation. We caution those who embark on such a journey not to expect it to be a quick one. Meaningful change usually requires a clear understanding of what is already in operation, substantial skill development, and adequate resources for the duration of the change cycle. We believe the benefits that result from an evaluation system that promotes improvement and reinforcement for teachers rather than skepticism or resentment will more than justify the rigors of the trip.

[1]For interesting descriptions of innovative teacher evaluation systems, refer to A.E. Wise, et al., *Case Studies for Teacher Evaluation: A Study of Effective Practices*, A Rand Note prepared for the National Institute of Education (N-2133-NIE) (Santa Monica, Calif.: Rand Corp., 1984).

Appendix

TEACHER EVALUATION EXPERIENCE QUESTIONNAIRE

This form has been designed to allow you to describe your experience with teacher evaluation in some detail. Your responses will be combined with those of other teachers to yield a clearer picture of the key ingredients in an effective teacher evaluation experience. The goal of this research is to determine if and how the evaluation process can be revised to help it serve relevant and useful purposes. If we are to reach this goal, it will be important for you to provide frank and honest responses. This is why your answers will remain anonymous.

As you will see, this is not a superficial questionnaire. It is designed to be comprehensive in scope and will take more than a few minutes to complete. For this reason, it is crucial that you read and follow directions very carefully. Please set aside twenty uninterrupted minutes to provide thoughtful responses.

The Definition of Teacher Evaluation

Guidelines for teacher evaluation often suggest that probationary and tenured teachers be formally evaluated annually. The process leading to the once-a-year evaluation may consist of goal-setting, classroom observation, and conferencing between teacher and supervisor before and after the observation. Sound practice also may include less formal, more frequent interactions between supervisor and teacher. When reference is made in this questionnaire to *teacher evaluation*, it should be understood to encompass all these elements.

Specific Instructions

Given this definition of teacher evaluation, please reflect on the last time you were evaluated—your *most recent* experience with your teacher evaluation system. Regard the entire evaluation process, including planning for evaluation, classroom observations, and feedback. As you think about this experience, how would you rate the *overall quality* of the evaluation? Circle the appropriate number:

Low quality 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 High quality

Next, please rate the *impact* of that teacher evaluation experience on three specific aspects of your professional practices. Use the scales pro-

vided to indicate impact, from 0 meaning no impact to 9 meaning strong impact.

- Please code the *impact on your attitudes* about teaching: A strong impact rating (9) would reflect a profound change in how you feel about the content you teach, your students, and/or yourself as a teacher.

  No impact 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 Strong impact

- Code the *impact on your teaching behaviors and strategies*: A strong impact (9) would reflect major changes in your instructional behavior, classroom management strategies, evaluation practices, and/or other observable dimensions of your teaching.

  No impact 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 Strong impact

- Code the *impact on your understanding of the teaching-learning process*: A strong impact (9) would reflect a change in your ability to account for your effectiveness (or lack thereof), explain the reasons for your instructional decisions, and/or better understand student needs or behavior.

  No impact 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 Strong impact

Finally, please use the scales provided below (A through E) to describe yourself and the nature of your *most recent* teacher evaluation experience. Do this by—

- Considering the attribute to be described
- Studying the scale to be used to describe it
- Selecting the letter that represents the point you select on each continuum
- Circling that letter.

A. Describe your attributes as a teacher:

1. Rate your overall competence as a teacher.	I'm minimally competent	A	B	C	D	E	I'm an outstanding teacher
2. Rate the strength of your professional expectations of yourself.	I demand little	A	B	C	D	E	I demand a great deal

Describe your interpersonal manner:

3. Orientation to risk-taking	I avoid risks	A	B	C	D	E	I take risks
4. Orientation to others	I'm reserved, private	A	B	C	D	E	I'm open, public
5. Attribution of reasons for your success/failure	I hold others responsible	A	B	C	D	E	I hold myself responsible
6. Orientation to change	I'm relatively slow to change	A	B	C	D	E	I'm relatively flexible
7. Orientation to experimentation in classroom	I don't experiment	A	B	C	D	E	I experiment frequently
8. Openness to criticism	I'm relatively closed	A	B	C	D	E	I'm relatively open
9. Knowledge of technical aspects of teaching	I know a little	A	B	C	D	E	I know a great deal
10. Knowledge of subject matter	I know a little	A	B	C	D	E	I know a great deal

Describe your teaching experience:

11. At current grade

A: 0 to 1 year
B: 2 to 3 years
C: 4 to 5 years
D: 6 to 10 years
E: 11 or more years

12. With current content (if secondary teacher)

A: 0 to 1 year
B: 2 to 3 years
C: 4 to 5 years
D: 6 to 10 years
E: 11 or more years

13. Experience with teacher evaluation prior to most recent experience	Waste of time	A	B	C	D	E	Helpful

B. Describe your perceptions of the person who evaluated your performance (most recently):

14. Credibility as a source of feedback	Not credible	A	B	C	D	E	Very credible
15. Working relationship with you	Adversary	A	B	C	D	E	Helper
16. Level of trust	Not trustworthy	A	B	C	D	E	Trustworthy
17. Interpersonal manner	Threatening	A	B	C	D	E	Not threatening
18. Temperament	Impatient	A	B	C	D	E	Patient
19. Flexibility	Rigid	A	B	C	D	E	Flexible
20. Knowledge of technical aspects of teaching	Not knowledgeable	A	B	C	D	E	Knowl-edgeable
21. Capacity to demonstrate or model needed improvements	Low	A	B	C	D	E	High
22. Familiarity with your particular classroom	Unfamiliar	A	B	C	D	E	Very familiar
23. Experience in classrooms in general	Little	A	B	C	D	E	A great deal
24. Usefulness of suggestions for improvement	Useless	A	B	C	D	E	Useful
25. Persuasiveness of ratio-nale for suggestions	Not persuasive	A	B	C	D	E	Very persuasive

C. Describe the attributes of the information gathered on your performance during your most recent evaluation:

What procedures were used to address the dimensions of your teaching (standards) to be evaluated?

26. Were standards communi-cated to you?	Not at all	A	B	C	D	E	In great detail
27. Were standards clear to you?	Vague	A	B	C	D	E	Clear
28. Were standards endorsed by you as appropriate for your classroom?	Not endorsed	A	B	C	D	E	Endorsed

29. What was the form of the standards?

A: Goals to be attained
B: Personal and/or professional traits to possess

30. Were the standards. . . The same for all teachers? A B C D E Unique to you?

To what extent were the following sources of performance information tapped as part of the evaluation?

31. Observation of your classroom performance — Not considered A B C D E Used extensively

32. Examination of classroom or school records (lesson plans, etc.) — Not considered A B C D E Used extensively

33. Examination of student achievement — Not considered A B C D E Used extensively

Extent of observations in your classroom:

(Note: In these items, FORMAL refers to observations that were preannounced and were preceded and followed by a conference with the evaluator; INFORMAL refers to unannounced drop-in visits.)

34. Number of FORMAL observations per year (most recent experience)
A: 0
B: 1
C: 2
D: 3
E: 4 or more

35. Approximate frequency of INFORMAL observations (most recent experience)
A: None
B: Less than 1 per month
C: Once per month
D: Once per week
E: Daily

Average length of observation (most recent experience):

36. FORMAL — Brief (few minutes) A B C D E Extended (40 minutes or more)

37. INFORMAL — Brief (few minutes) A B C D E Extended (40 minutes or more)

38. Number of different people observing and evaluating you during the year
A: Supervisor only
B: Supervisor & 1 other person
C: Supervisor & 2 other people
D: Supervisor & 3 or more others
E: Other

If others besides your supervisor evaluated you, who were they (titles only)?
_____
_____
_____

D. Please describe the attributes of the feedback you received:

39. Amount of information received	None	A	B	C	D	E	Great deal
40. Frequency of feedback	Infrequent	A	B	C	D	E	Frequent
41. Formality of feedback	Informal	A	B	C	D	E	Formal
42. Depth of information provided	Shallow	A	B	C	D	E	In-depth
43. Quality of the ideas and suggestions contained in the feedback	Low	A	B	C	D	E	High
44. Specificity of information provided	General	A	B	C	D	E	Specific
45. Nature of information provided	Judgmental	A	B	C	D	E	Descriptive
46. Timing of the feedback	Delayed	A	B	C	D	E	Immediate
47. Feedback focused on district teaching standards	Ignored them	A	B	C	D	E	Reflected them

E. Describe the attributes of the evaluation context:

48. Amount of time spent on the evaluation process, including your time and that of all other participants	None	A	B	C	D	E	Great deal

Resources available for professional development:

49. Time allotted during the teaching day for professional development	None	A	B	C	D	E	Great deal
50. Available training programs and models	None	A	B	C	D	E	Many

District values and policies in evaluation:

51. Clarity of policy statements regarding purpose for evaluation	Vague	A	B	C	D	E	Clear
52. Intended role of evaluation	Teacher accountability	A	B	C	D	E	Teacher growth

53. Recent history of labor relations in district	Turbulent	A	B	C	D	E	Tranquil
54. Impact of bargaining agreement on evaluation process	None	A	B	C	D	E	Great deal
55. Impact of state law on evaluation process	None	A	B	C	D	E	Great deal

F. Are there other dimensions of you as a teacher, the nature of the performance data collected, the nature of the feedback, the evaluation context, or other factors that you think are related to the success (or lack of success) of your past teacher evaluation experiences that should be included in the above list? If so, please specify.

DESCRIBING YOURSELF AS AN EVALUATOR OF TEACHERS

This form has been designed to allow you to describe yourself as an evaluator of teachers. Your responses will be combined with those of teachers and other evaluators to yield a clear picture of the key ingredients in an effective teacher evaluation experience. The goal of this research is to determine if and how the evaluation process can be revised to help it serve relevant and useful purposes. If we are to reach this goal, it will be important for you to provide frank and honest responses. This is why your answers will remain anonymous.

Please use the following scales to describe yourself on the attributes listed. Circle the letter that represents the point you select on each continuum.

How would you describe your—

1. Knowledge of the technical aspects of teaching?	I know little	A	B	C	D	E	I know a great deal
2. Capacity to demonstrate or model needed changes in teacher performance?	Low	A	B	C	D	E	High
3. Amount of experience as a teacher in the classroom?	None	A	B	C	D	E	Extensive
4. Recency of experience as a teacher in the classroom?	Not recent	A	B	C	D	E	Recent
5. Repertoire of suggestions for good teaching?	Limited	A	B	C	D	E	Extensive
6. Persuasiveness of the rationale you use to defend your suggestions?	Not persuasive	A	B	C	D	E	Persuasive
7. Knowledge of subject matter taught by teachers you evaluate?	Limited	A	B	C	D	E	Extensive
8. Strength of your expectations for yourself?	Demand little	A	B	C	D	E	Demand a great deal

9. Experience as a supervisor of teachers?

A: 0 to 1 year
B: 2 to 4 years
C: 5 to 7 years
D: 8 to 10 years
E: 11 or more years

10. General expectations of teachers?	Not able to improve	A	B	C	D	E	Able to improve
11. Expectations regarding teachers' motivations?	Willing to improve	A	B	C	D	E	Not willing to improve
12. Ability to encourage risk-taking in teachers?	Low	A	B	C	D	E	High
13. Willingness to take risks yourself?	I don't take risks	A	B	C	D	E	I take risks
14. Working relationship to teachers?	Adversary	A	B	C	D	E	Helper

How would you describe your interpersonal manner in terms of your—

15. Level of teacher trust?	Low	A	B	C	D	E	High
16. Interpersonal manner?	Threatening	A	B	C	D	E	Not threatening
17. Temperament?	Impatient	A	B	C	D	E	Patient
18. Flexibility?	Rigid	A	B	C	D	E	Flexible
19. Attitude regarding the purpose of teacher evaluation?	Teacher accountability	A	B	C	D	E	Teacher growth
20. Confidence that this purpose will be achieved?	Lack confidence	A	B	C	D	E	Very confident
21. Training in teacher evaluation?	None	A	B	C	D	E	Extensive
22. Listening skills?	Ineffective	A	B	C	D	E	Very effective
23. Ability to convey your messages to teachers clearly?	Unclear	A	B	C	D	E	Very clear
24. Ability to give teachers positive feedback?	Ineffective	A	B	C	D	E	Very effective
25. Ability to give teachers negative feedback?	Ineffective	A	B	C	D	E	Very effective
26. Ability to mix positive and negative feedback?	Relatively ineffective at mixing	A	B	C	D	E	Very effective at mixing

Are there other dimensions of you as an evaluator of teachers that you think are related to your success (or lack of success) in that role? If so, please specify.